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No. 31.

WHEN VIOLETS BLOOM.

BY OLIVE REA.

The crimson in the western sky
Falls to a dreary leaden gray.
While through a heavy mass of clouds
The new moon cuts her shining way.
Dim shadows settle on the hills
While every white with drift of snow,
While underneath a fringe of frost
A brooklet lingers, chattering slow.
The ruddy flames, in rambling shape,
Fit up and down the varnished wall,
While silver beams of pale moonlight
Upon the crimson carpet fall.
At ten blue eyes, with eyelid glance,
Browsed on the left for its room,
And painless murmurs, soft and low,
"I shall be well when violets bloom."
For I long to live, to feel the warmth
Of summer breezes on my cheek,
To feel my languid pulses stirred
By scents playing hide and seek
Among the fragrant beds of flowers
That every hillside carpet
And watch the golden sunbeams glide
The sunny tracks where violets lie.
The winter days creep slowly by,
The warm spring sunshine lingers
Down into hollows lined with moss,
And up the steep hillsides one
To where a clump of violets bloom,
By hazy southern windows,
Where many blossoms white and pure,
Will deck our dainty dainties soon.

THE CYPRER TELEGRAM.

By CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GROWTH OF MYSTERY.

The next day dawned upon Dover, a day of sun and showers, and a cloud had fallen which all the day of summer would not dispel. Mr. Browning was missing. He had gone out about nine o'clock the previous evening, apparently angry, though why, no one knew. The night had passed without his returning. This was something very unusual. He never spent the night from home without announcing his intention, and then only when absent from the town. As the morning moved on without any indication of the cause of his absence, his daughter became alarmed. A servant was sent to the village to make inquiries. His quest was in vain. Mr. Browning had not been seen there. It was supposed possible that he had taken the night train from the town, called away by some sudden message. But the ticket-agent declared that he had purchased no ticket, and no person had seen him at the station. Inquiry was next made at the various country-houses which he might possibly have visited. But equally in vain. Three or four hours were thus spent in unavailing search. The alarm became general. His friends in the town took up the matter, and established a systematic search for the missing man. Fears began to be entertained that some foul play was at the bottom of this strange disappearance. Certain facts were now developed which had not appeared before. First among these was the circumstance that the telegraph operator, George Downey, had not yet appeared at his office. He was known to be an eccentric man, who had been growing still more peculiar in his ways lately. Negligence in respect to his duties had occurred on several late occasions, so that his absence was not considered suspicious until several hours had passed from the usual time of opening the office. On asking for him at his boarding-house, it was found that he, too, had not been home that night. The fact of the quarrel between him and Mr. Browning at once rose into importance. The auditors of this quarrel told of the threats they had heard, abundantly exaggerating them. Mr. Benton was questioned concerning the quarrel. He shook his head doubtfully, saying that he had feared at the time some ill result. Downey had been very bitter and revengeful. Harvey Benton was a brother-in-law of the missing man, and now took a prominent interest in the search. He had not appeared until the quest had assumed this serious aspect, and it was noticed that he was unusually pale, with a peculiar expression of countenance. This, however, was attributed to the shock of the news now told him. He had been on intimate terms with his relative, and though he was no favorite with the people, there was much sympathy with his evident distress. He seemed slightly lame, as if in pain, though he appeared to be making an effort to overcome these indications. Another link was now added to the chain of evidence. One of the villagers, who had gone that evening to a place at some distance, and who only now related that he had seen Downey, about half past eight the previous evening, on the high road at some distance from the town. He had spoken to him on passing, and received no answer from the operator, who was walking and moving his hands

in an excited manner. After leaving him some distance behind, he had looked back, and seen that Downey had left the road, and was crossing the fields towards the creek. It was then rather dark, and the form of the operator was barely distinguishable, but he felt sure that he had noticed another person join him. Of this second person he could only say that he seemed to be of a tall figure. The hour, of which he felt sure, proved that this could not have been Mr. Browning, as he had not left his house till a later hour. The next point was brought out by Mary Browning, who had found in the library a note, crumpled as if in anger, and laying partly concealed, in a corner of the apartment. Mr. Benton and others had been in the room at the time it was written, and he was to be a written message to her father, which ran as follows: "Sir—Yesterday you insulted me grossly. To-day you treated me as a slave, and I will teach you, to teach you a mean and unmanly advantage of me, when your tools were around to save you from my just vengeance. (Signed) You dare not meet me man to man, with none to step between. I know you for a base poltroon. I defy you and spit upon you! If you have the heart of a man, I will be at the turn of the creek above the town at nine o'clock to-night. If you dare show yourself there, you will receive the chastisement of a man. I will be at the turn of the creek, what it is to incur the vengeance of an honest man. GEORGE DOWNEY."

This letter excited the strongest apprehensions. Mr. Browning had left the house about the hour mentioned. Investigation disclosed the fact that he had taken with him, not only a heavy loaded cane, but also a small, single-barrelled pistol. The mystery was deepening. If foul play had occurred, to which of the two missing men was it to be attributed, to the infuriated operator, or to the choleric gentleman? The party of searchers at once followed up this discovery, with the exception of Mr. Benton, who remained at Vinndell to attend to Mary Browning, whose distress at her father's disappearance was rendered doubly intense by the reading of this epistle. The spot mentioned was familiar to them all. It was a little-frequented locality, where the stream made a sharp bend, some quarter of a mile above the village. A few rods of swampy ground rendered it difficult of approach, except by following the banks of the creek. Arrived here, the marks of a struggle were at once evident. The grass had been trodden down for a considerable space around. At one side lay a cap, which was at once recognized as having been worn by Downey. On examining it a fearful link in the chain of mystery was observed. The inside of the cap was red with clotted blood. All stood appalled, their eyes seeking each other with glances of fright, as this silent witness of a terrible crime met their startled gaze. The dread of murder, which had been obtruded itself upon their minds, but to which no one had yet ventured to give voice, now became a soul-crushing reality, a most horrible development in the mystery which had been growing upon them. Clearer search showed that the grass was spotted with blood, and that a red pool had been sucked in by the thirsty soil just where the struggle had been fought. Point by point the dreadful circumstance was being unfolded. Yet they had not touched the threshold of the difficulty. Which of the missing men had shed this crimson life current there was nothing to show. It was known that Mr. Browning was armed. Downey, also, was probably prepared for offensive action. He had lately showed signs of a weakened brain. May he not, in a sudden impulse of insanity, have committed murder? The active lad, who had served the missing operator as messenger boy, had joined the party of searchers, and at this moment announced a discovery. He had found, at some distance out in the swampy ground, a small pistol. This



"DO YOU DARE ACCUSE ANY ONE IN THIS HOUSE OF MAKING AWAY WITH YOUR PAPERS?" ASKED MR. BENTON, IN A THREATENING VOICE.

was recognized as the weapon of Mr. Browning. It had not been discharged, and the powder was still in the pan. It was the third person connected with the terrible hidden crime? There was no one in the vicinity to whom they thought of ascribing their complicity. The lives and characters of all the inhabitants were well known. There was no man of murderous tendencies dwelling near Dover. The third person must be a stranger. Then came whispers of a strangely behaved traveller who was stopping at the village inn. Who he was nobody knew. He had arrived the previous morning, and had talked and acted in a very peculiar manner. A little weak-minded the innkeeper thought him. He soon came out to be had with and had an interview with Mr. Browning the same day. His odd behavior in the house was recounted by the servants. Lord words had been heard between him and his host. As he left the house, he had been heard to bid the latter to beware, and had spoken of bloodshed. Further inquiry elicited the fact that he had left the inn about eight o'clock in the evening, and had not returned till after ten. That morning, immediately after breakfast, he had taken the train southward from the town, purchasing a ticket to the next important station.

The case was certainly growing serious. Many hesitated to conclude that this man must be connected with the mystery, and the intention was entertained of sending an officer after him to bring him back to Dover, on the charge of being an accomplice in the murder. The spot mentioned was familiar to them all. It was a little-frequented locality, where the stream made a sharp bend, some quarter of a mile above the village. A few rods of swampy ground rendered it difficult of approach, except by following the banks of the creek. Arrived here, the marks of a struggle were at once evident. The grass had been trodden down for a considerable space around. At one side lay a cap, which was at once recognized as having been worn by Downey. On examining it a fearful link in the chain of mystery was observed. The inside of the cap was red with clotted blood. All stood appalled, their eyes seeking each other with glances of fright, as this silent witness of a terrible crime met their startled gaze. The dread of murder, which had been obtruded itself upon their minds, but to which no one had yet ventured to give voice, now became a soul-crushing reality, a most horrible development in the mystery which had been growing upon them. Clearer search showed that the grass was spotted with blood, and that a red pool had been sucked in by the thirsty soil just where the struggle had been fought. Point by point the dreadful circumstance was being unfolded. Yet they had not touched the threshold of the difficulty. Which of the missing men had shed this crimson life current there was nothing to show. It was known that Mr. Browning was armed. Downey, also, was probably prepared for offensive action. He had lately showed signs of a weakened brain. May he not, in a sudden impulse of insanity, have committed murder? The active lad, who had served the missing operator as messenger boy, had joined the party of searchers, and at this moment announced a discovery. He had found, at some distance out in the swampy ground, a small pistol. This

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being his guardian. It came out that he had left papers with his gentleman during his first visit there, in proof that he was the person that he represented himself to be. He had made inquiry for these papers during his last visit, telling where Mr. Browning had placed them. The place was searched, and they were not to be found. They had disappeared. The whole library and other probable places in the house were examined, but in vain. No trace of the important papers was to be discovered. The servants were closely questioned, but no one had seen or knew anything concerning them. The object of this search came to the ears of Miss Browning, who, over-riding herself of a valuable property on the strength of an unexpressed statement of her father, and without success. Indeed, it could not help feeling somewhat indignant that you should so early intrude on Miss Browning's grief and the distress of the household with such a claim. Common courtesy demanded that you should have waited a reasonable time to elapse, instead of so inopportunistically pressing a demand which, to appearance, had no foundation in fact. You must see that it was ill-advised. "You cannot conceive how much obliged I am to you for your kind advice," replied Lovelace, somewhat sarcastically. "It is rather unfortunate that I did not meet with you sooner, so as to profit by your opinion. May I venture to ask one question?" "Certainly."

"I am anxious to know how much you suppose Miss Browning and the household matter to me. For instance, about what per cent. of your interest in yourself would you quote your interest in a parcel of strangers?" "There are cases in which selfishness is an unwarrantable fault," replied Lovelace, somewhat sarcastically. "Precisely. And cases in which it is a very useful virtue." "That is not one of those cases." "Pardon me again, I am inclined to think that it is." "For a household plunged in grief to be troubled by a mercenary demand that could as well have been left for a more decent time was, to say the least, unpleasant, and pained me exceedingly. "Oh, I can play Shylock on occasion. You should see me as the mercenary Israelite. 'My ducats! my ducats!' Not 'my daughter.' It's only 'my ducats' in this version of the play." "So it appears. Shylock is a good parallel."

"Isn't he? Oh, I am a veritable Shylock. I try to do justice to this grieving household. I should have waited longer, no doubt. Unfortunately, in my grasping spirit, I did not care one fig for the household or two figs for the daughter. Yet I will admit that I did wrong."

"I knew you must admit it if you properly considered the matter," said Mr. Benton, with an appearance of satisfaction. "Yes, I acknowledge my error in being so slow about the matter. I left it just long enough for the papers to make a total disappearance."

Mr. Benton half rose from his chair, with a very angry expression of countenance. "Do you dare accuse anyone in this house of making away with your papers?" he asked, in a threatening voice. "Why I have a good deal of that kind of impudence about me," drawled out Lovelace, placing one foot on the table before him, and looking his questioner coolly in the eye. "Now, if I were out west, where they've got a fashion of settling things by their right names and settling them quietly among themselves, I don't think I would waste many words in accusing anybody. I have found a little application of footspeak very beneficial in such cases."

He leisurely drew from his pocket a large-bladed bowie knife, with which he affected to pick his teeth. Mr. Benton turned yet paler and stalked out his arm for the bell-pull. "Don't get flustered," said Lovelace, replacing the dangerous-looking weapon in his pocket. "I am in a civilized quarter now, where people don't carry out their fortunes. No, they make them by the process known as picking and stealing."

of it, or if he did, kept his opinion to himself, affecting to make light of what were really alarming indications. On the occasion in which we again introduce him to the reader, he was seated in an easy chair in the room at Vinndell which had served Mr. Browning as an office. Opposite him sat our old acquaintance, John Milton Lovelace. The latter gentleman had passed the week with very little manifestation of interest in the subject that was agitating the community. After the unsuccessful search for his papers, he had spent most of his time in idle lounging about the inn, either undecided what course to pursue, or waiting with some fixed purpose. He was now seated in a careless attitude, listening to the remarks of his companion. "My dear sir," the latter was saying, "I don't say that I have any special reason to doubt your word, but you must be aware that I have no special reason to accept it. In that respect I am in a negative state of mind. Of course, I am open to conviction. You have only to advance sufficient proof."

"Which is just what I have done. The proofs are here—in this house. I call on you to produce them." "To which I make no objection. Show me what they are and where they are, and so one more ready than I to do you full justice." "They are documents which I left in Mr. Browning's hands, fully establishing my identity."

"Yet this is a very serious matter," said Mr. Benton in a very grave tone. "There are no such papers here. It is not at all probable that Mr. Browning removed them in his unexplained disappearance. You certainly cannot expect to possess yourself of a valuable property on the strength of an unexpressed statement of her father, and without success. Indeed, it could not help feeling somewhat indignant that you should so early intrude on Miss Browning's grief and the distress of the household with such a claim. Common courtesy demanded that you should have waited a reasonable time to elapse, instead of so inopportunistically pressing a demand which, to appearance, had no foundation in fact. You must see that it was ill-advised."

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"Isn't he? Oh, I am a veritable Shylock. I try to do justice to this grieving household. I should have waited longer, no doubt. Unfortunately, in my grasping spirit, I did not care one fig for the household or two figs for the daughter. Yet I will admit that I did wrong."

"I knew you must admit it if you properly considered the matter," said Mr. Benton, with an appearance of satisfaction. "Yes, I acknowledge my error in being so slow about the matter. I left it just long enough for the papers to make a total disappearance."

Mr. Benton half rose from his chair, with a very angry expression of countenance. "Do you dare accuse anyone in this house of making away with your papers?" he asked, in a threatening voice. "Why I have a good deal of that kind of impudence about me," drawled out Lovelace, placing one foot on the table before him, and looking his questioner coolly in the eye. "Now, if I were out west, where they've got a fashion of settling things by their right names and settling them quietly among themselves, I don't think I would waste many words in accusing anybody. I have found a little application of footspeak very beneficial in such cases."

He leisurely drew from his pocket a large-bladed bowie knife, with which he affected to pick his teeth. Mr. Benton turned yet paler and stalked out his arm for the bell-pull. "Don't get flustered," said Lovelace, replacing the dangerous-looking weapon in his pocket. "I am in a civilized quarter now, where people don't carry out their fortunes. No, they make them by the process known as picking and stealing."

fortunately sufficient of both to keep up their strength; and they in turn have been ministering angels—tender nurses to the men who have made all their misery.

Thus have they lived up till the night of the sixth day since their landing on the island, and a heavy rainfall, falling the concavity of the boat's sail, enables them to replenish the locker, with other vessels they had brought ashore.

On the morning of the tenth they are relinquishing themselves to bitter despair, and have called to the Dutchman—who has been posted on the heights above, on the lookout for a passing sail—to come down. A last solemn council of ways and means is to be held, and all hands must assist. But he neither obeys nor gives back response. He does not even look in their direction? They can see him, standing erect, with face turned towards the sea, and one hand over his eyes, shading them from the sun. He appears to be regarding some object in the offing.

Presently he lowers the spread plank, and raises a telephone with which he is provided.

They stand watching him, speechless, and with heart beating at the question of the time forgotten. In the gleaming of that glass they have a fancy there may be life, as there is light.

The silence continues till it is seen going down. Then they hear words which send the blood in quick current through their veins, bringing hope back into their hearts.

"Sail is sight!"

"Sail is sight!" Three little words, but full of meaning, all carrying the question of life.

To the ears of the starving crew, as music, despite the harsh Teutonic pronunciation of him who gave them utterance, it came like a benediction.

At the shout from above, all have faced toward the sea, and stand gazing its surface. But with gaze unwarded. The white decks seem afar as only the wings of gulls.

"Where away?" shouts one, interrogating him on the hill.

"Southward they cannot see. In this direction their view is bounded; a projection of the cliff intervening between them and the outside shore. All who are able, start off to the summit of the hill. The stronger ones rush up the gorge, as if their lives depended on speed. The weaker go toiling after. One or two, weaker still, stay below, to wait the report that will soon reach them.

The first up, on clearing the scarp, have their eyes upon the Dutchman. His behavior might cause them surprise, if they could not account for it. The signal-staff is upon the higher of the two peaks, some two hundred yards beyond. He is beside it, and apparently himself. Dancing over the ground, he makes grotesque gesticulations, tooting his arms about, and waving his hat overhead—all the while shouting as if to the summit of the hill, repeating the word: "Ahoy, ahoy!"

Looking, they can see no ship, nor craft of any kind. For a moment they think him mad, and after all it may be a mistake. Certainly, however, the Dutchman's fear gives almost delirious. There is a sail, and although long leagues off, little more than a speck, their practiced eyes tell them he is steering that way—running close in. Keeping her course, she comes past the island—within sight of their signal, so long exposed to no purpose. Without stopping to reflect further, they strain on towards the summit, where the staff is erected.

Harry Blaw is the first to reach it, and clutching the telescope, jerks it from the hands of the half-crazed Dutchman. Raising it to his eye, he bends it on the distant sail, there keeping it more than a minute. The others have meanwhile come up, and, clustering around, impatiently question him.

"What is she? How is she standing?"

"A bit of a barque," responds Blaw. "And from what I can make out, she's hugging the shore. I'll be better able to tell you when she draws out from that cleft of cloud."

Gomez, standing by, appears eager to get hold of the glass, but Blaw seems reluctant to give it up. Still holding it at his eye, he says:

"See to the sails, mates! Spread the tarpaulin to its full stretch. Face it square, so's to give 'em every chance o' sightin' it."

Striker and Davis spring to the piece of tarred canvas, and, grasping it, one at each corner, draw out the canvas, and hold as directed.

All the while Blaw stands with the telescope levelled, loath to relinquish it. But Gomez, growing impatient, insists on having his turn, and it is at length surrendered to him.

Harry Blaw, stepping aside, seems to feel some anxiety about the telescope. Strong it must be, judging from its effects on the ex-man-o'-war's man. On his face there is an expression difficult to describe—surprise amounting to amazement—joy, subdued by anxiety. Blaw is giving up the glass, he pulls off his pilot-coat, then divesting himself of his shirt—a scarlet flannel—he suspends it from the outer end of the cross-piece which supports the tarpaulin; as he does so, saying to Striker and Davis: "That's a signal no ship ought to disregard, and won't, if manned by Christian men. We won't let 'em see it. You two stay here, and keep the things well spread. I'm going below to say a word to them poor creatures. Stand by the staff, and don't let any of 'em hand down the signal."

"Ay, ay!" answers Striker, without comprehending, and somewhat wondering at Blaw's words—under the circumstances, strange. "All right, mate. Ye may depend on me as Bill."

"I know it—I do," rejoins the ex-man-o'-war's man, again drawing the dreadnought over his shoulders. "Both of you be true to me, and 'fore long I may be able to show I ain't ungrateful."

Saying this, he separates from the Sydney Ducks, and hurries down towards the gorge.

Both, as they stand by the signal staff, now more than ever wonder at what he has said, and interrogate one another as to his meaning.

In the midst of their mutual questioning, they are attracted by a cry straggling inland. It is from the Dutchman, brought down the telescope, and holds it in his hands, that shake as with palsy.

He almost lets drop the telescope, as, turning to the others, he says in a scared but firm voice: "The Condot!"

"Condot? Impossible!" cry the others, speaking together in a hoarse whisper.

"It is, for all that," rejoins Gomez. "How so, I don't understand any more than you. But that Condot, I tell you, is the Dutchman's name, and I'll take my solemn oath."

Gomez's speech calls up strange thoughts, that take possession of the minds of those listening to it. How could it be the Dutchman, long since scuttled, sent to the bottom of the sea? Impossible! The sail seen must be a specter!

In their weak state, with nerves unnaturally excited, they almost believe this—one and all impressed with wild, weird fancies, that strike terror to their guilty souls.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A new story next week, by Mrs. HENRY WOOD, author of "East Lynne," etc., entitled "RAFFLED."

PATTY PAYNE PAPERS.

By MARGERY LAIRD.

NUMBER IV.

"Ah, me, mine is a hard lot," sighed Patty Payne, dimly, flattening her small nose against the window pane, and looking out before a world very much under water, and a laden, weeping sky.

"Any harder than mine?" asked Agatha, the housemaid, glancing up brightly from her seat by the fire.

"My dear, I don't know," said Patty, "but I feel as if I were a fruit cake, and I'm sure mine would be a fruit cake."

"That statement only aggravates my misery, as I am sure mine would be a fruit cake," said Agatha, glancing up brightly from her seat by the fire.

"What is the matter, dear?" said Agatha, the housemaid, glancing up brightly from her seat by the fire.

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Hugh?" pressing her face more closely against the pane.

"But Hugh would, and I would, and Dr. Payne, Patty. Oh, Patty, what are you doing?"

"Nothing dreadful, Marg. I was only trying to see you, dear old sobersides," cried Patty, merrily. "It is such fun to see you look frightened. You ought to know that I wouldn't do anything wrong."

"Consciousness is an admirable quality," said Marg.

"Isn't it?" remarked serene Miss Payne. "Margery, I think I shall give a ball."

"A ball?" said Patty.

"A ball, dear," said Marg. "It is one of the commonest facts of existence. We won't spend a cent of Madame's money, and we'll behave with all the propriety imaginable. So where would be the harm?"

"It would be no harm, 'per se,' Patty—like larceny, or murder—or—"

"Flirting," suggested the little dear.

"Isn't it?" said Marg. "You might argue that Madame had given no counter-command and would possibly not object."

"But you ought to consult Miss Hoyt."

"Ah, that would be a good deal like an eloquent with the parents' full consent," said Patty. "Why, half the fun would be outwitting Miss Hoyt."

"It is very, very wrong, as well as unwise, Patty," protested.

"I intend to do it," said Patty, decidedly, though in her soft, most plaintive tones. And I knew her so well that my next remark was only a question.

"But how?"

"Why, Laura and Agatha will do anything I want them to, under protest, of course, and we all have plenty of pocket money, and can get up a nice supper. Old Edie and Ellen—the only domestic help—will be invited. We will stand on our heads if I told them to do it, and the younger girls will all be in bed and out of harm's way long before we get up."

"That's all right, dear," said Agatha, "but I don't think it is wise to stand on our heads if I told them to do it, and the younger girls will all be in bed and out of harm's way long before we get up."

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"You will stand by me, Marg?" she whispered, giving my fingers a tiny squeeze. "And if things turn out wrong, don't tell me, dear?"

Agatha, however, and I lingered upstairs until the sound of music forced us down. We were both anxious, and Agatha, especially, fretted and said that as the old parlour of the house would certainly be full.

"I know Miss Hoyt holds me in a measure responsible for the good behavior of the girls in her absence," she said, as I passed slowly through the lower hall.

"She thinks I am so wise and steady, oh, dear!"

The schoolroom was like some lovely transformation scene, only the magic wand of Mrs. Semple's wealth and Patty's taste could have changed that bare, gloomy region of maps and desks and benches into a beautiful ball room, lace draped and flower decked, seeming to my eyes as I entered a wonderful confusion of blossoming plants and blossoming faces, flaking skirts of tulle and lace, and flowers decked, seeming to my eyes as I entered a wonderful confusion of blossoming plants and blossoming faces.

There was another door at the further end of the schoolroom, and while Dick and Agatha stood talking to Patty, there was a little buzz of conversation and excitement about it. I could see that the door had opened, and closed on some one entering, and that a sudden chill had fallen on the party of the young people, though Mrs. Semple, and the rest of the chaperones and chaperones of the entertainment were gathered in a little knot near that particular doorway, and Laura's mother seemed to be taking the lead in the talking and laughing that reached our ears.

"Let's see what's happened," said Dick, giving Agatha's arm, and leaving her, by right of juvenile acquaintance, to follow in the shadow of his mother. "I wonder if anything is up."

Mother Semple seems to be in the thick of it, and she was in a perfect state of bewilderment as to what was going on. "I don't know," said Dick, "but I'll go and see."

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"I'll go

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

us discuss it in that spirit. Do you wish your confederate to be present?"

"Call him in, if you please," replied Mrs. Martin, decisively.

"Better not, perhaps," said Mr. Westworth, coolly. "The scene might prove too affecting. Stay a moment, I'll get rid of him."

Petworth opened the door and went out. Mrs. Martin, with a sigh of relief, found herself at liberty.

"I've found an old acquaintance here, Wilford," said Petworth, with a smile, meant to be significant. "Whom I want to have a little talk with. I'll join you down at the hotel directly, and we'll go on board together."

"All right," said Wilford. "Of course the visit was a coincidence. I've been taking the people here, and I find they're only been here a few years. Don't be long."

And he went off, strolling along the edge of the cliff, whistling carelessly, till he came to the footpath leading down to the town, which he descended.

As soon as he was out of sight, Mrs. Martin came out and locked the door of the parlor.

"I am not the tenant of this house, Robert," she said, "and I think we had better have the rest of our talk in some more convenient place."

"With all my heart," said Petworth. "We'll discuss the matter as we walk to the town, if you are going that way. The thing lies in a nutshell. You have a secret you think is damaging to my interests. I am, foolishly, perhaps, willing to pay a trifling ransom for it should be divulged. Now, what's your price?"

"A thousand pounds, Robert."

"Too much. It is not worth it. No, I'll rather pay you an annuity. Fifty pounds a year for your life."

"That would not suit me, Robert. The fact is, my husband—"

"Who is he, pray?"

"Oh, you have come together again, after all. Well, upon my word, I think it was the last thing you could do. By the way, he is here somewhere, is he not?"

"No, he is in England. I thought it better to shroud him within call just now, Robert," said Mrs. Martin, significantly.

"Well, Martin has a legacy of a thousand pounds from Mr. Arthur Wilford's will. Now, it seems that he is likely to lose that, through young Westworth's having everything."

"Oh, they've found that out, then, have they?" said Petworth.

"And so, indeed, the thousand pounds coming to us, it will go to you."

"Ah! I see," said Petworth, "that's the secret spring, then, which has been working against me. Well, perhaps that's fair enough. You want me to guarantee your getting the thousand pounds?"

"Mrs. Martin made a gesture of assent."

"Very well, I'll do it. I dare say it will all come out of my pocket, but I'll do it. Anything else?"

"Fifty pounds for expenses out of pocket."

"Very well, I agree to that, too. Any thing else?"

"Nothing for me, of course, the wedding with Olivia must be put off."

"Yes, I can see that," said Petworth, slowly. "Yes, all that's at an end. Well, I'll give you the fifty pounds now, you've earned it, pretty well, I must say—and my lawyer shall see to the rest."

You can call at my chambers to let a time, and everything shall be ready. And now farewell, my sweet sister. My heart is on the shore, and my back is on the sea."

And he went away humming to himself.

"He's got a heart like the nether millstone, my brother," said Mrs. Martin.

She watched him as he marched gallantly down to the beach, and saw him, after a few moments' delay in launching the boat, quickly board over the water to the yacht.

But Petworth, notwithstanding his apparent unconsciousness, was not a little moved by what he had just done. He was angry with himself, too, and a good deal horrified at his recent outbreak of temper. He had felt for the moment like a man, and the thought of the abuse that had been poured upon him filled him with secret terror. All the results of a long life of persistent scheming had been for the instant at stake, he had stood with his back to his neck, and he had shuddered at the risk he had run.

"What safety is there for a man," he said to himself, "when a shadow of passion can bring him to ruin?"

But as to what he had done in bribing his sister to silence he felt no compunction.

"A man," he muttered to himself, as he paced the deck. He had sent the boat down with Westworth's luggage and a letter to be delivered at the hotel; but he had made his temporary headquarters and had given the matter over to make all as soon as they had got the boat on board again."

"Yes, a man to take one's place, to carry on one's plans, to keep the property together, to be a prop to one's age, that's well enough, but a man that in his heart would despise his father-in-law, where I don't see it," cried Petworth, shaking his fist towards the shore, "but although I am now nothing, I have as much in me as my better self. And if there is one thing that makes me regret having brushed up this matter, it is that he will come in eventually for some rag of the property. No, I can't see that. There will be something over and above, and he will get it. It would be a fine name to claim as my son, strip him of his name and rights, and leave him without a shilling to beg his way along the high road. But I couldn't afford it. No, no, sixty-seventy thousand pounds I shall clear out of this estate, and I must have it. And even for Wilford's not coming back, and break the true state of affairs by his gradual return. He shall have a brighter gleam of light, and by and by, smarter than that fool, and she will soon be reconciled."

"Are you not coming down to break back, page?" said Olivia, as she sat on the companion ladder, "and where is Westworth?"

"I'm coming directly, dear, and as for Wilford, he's had a telegram or something, and I'm afraid he won't join us just yet. We must try and do without him for awhile."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A new story next week by Mrs. HENRY WOOD, author of "Mrs. Lynne," etc., entitled "HAPPY."

A BOX OF DIAMONDS.

By ALFRED A. GRANT.

I had been knocking about a good deal in South America, and shipped as doctor on board an old tub of a trader, leaving Rio de Janeiro, homeward bound for Bristol, with a cargo and a couple of cabin passengers.

The good Hope was commanded by Captain MacFarlane, a hard-headed old Scotchman, John Williamson, first mate, and a crew of thirteen hands, all made up of Englishmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, and a couple of negroes, one of whom was the steward's mate.

We sailed on the fourteenth of December, a blazing hot day, with scarcely a breath of wind to fill the sails, but the captain was anxious to get away, and he had no lack of men in port, and he had no mind to keep knocking his heels in quarantine longer than he could help.

We had, however, hardly got clear of Roca Island, when a breeze sprang up, and we were soon blowing along as fast as the old ship could be made to step along— all stridling on board.

On the twenty-first, however, a fair, clear bill of health on board.

On the twenty-first, however, a fair, clear bill of health on board. I was sitting forward, getting a breath of fresh air and smoking my pipe, when one of the steward's mates, came up and told me that one of our two cabin passengers, Mr. William Grierson, who had been very unwell during the night, and began to be afraid that he was in for a touch of the fever.

I went aft and saw him, but there did not appear to be any very alarming symptoms, just a general feeling of uneasiness, some cold medicine, and left him.

He was worse, however, next day and the next, yet it was not a case of yellow fever, and there was something to the symptoms that I am not ashamed to say, fully baffled me. On the twenty-fourth, he was in a more serious condition, and I communicated my fears to the captain.

"It is not yellow fever, that I am sure of," said the captain. "But he is not getting better, and I am sure of that."

"What is it, then?"

"Well, to tell truth, I can hardly say. Nothing that I am administrator seems to do him any good, and he is evidently sinking rapidly."

"Humph!" said the captain. "My intention, to say the least of it. Does he know of his condition?"

"He knows of it, but he is not at all alarmed."

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fortune into these gams, and these I intend to entrust to your care. Take this box to me for instructions as to the disposal of the contents."

I hesitated, but he was imperative. "Not a word—I am dying fast, and I implore you to accede to my last request."

I took the box, locked it, and left the cabin.

As I opened the door I ran up against Pete.

"What the devil are you doing here?"

"Nothing, mate."

I passed on along the main deck to wards my own cabin forward, and on my way I met the steward, MacFarlane.

"Is your patient, Doctor?"

"Dying, I fear. He cannot last long."

I passed on, and depositing the box in a place of safety, returned to Grierson. He was rapidly sinking, and in a few broken sentences he instructed me as to the disposal of his property.

His property consisted of a small box of jewelry, a watch, and a couple of letters. He also left me a list of names, and a letter to the family of the murdered man, whose name was given me, and who, he said, was a friend of his.

Finally, bidding me never to disclose the contents of his will, he died, except to the parties named in his dying bequest. Grierson relaxed into a state of partial insensibility, from which I vainly attempted to rouse him, and he died in a few minutes.

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a shower of falling stars into the black sea.

The negro, seeing my movement, left his hold of me, and sprang forward to catch the box as it fell. A heavy lurch, and I was alone on the deck.

The rapidly with which everything had taken place seemed to have stunned me, and I was unable to move.

I looked round—the deck was deserted, save by the man at the wheel, who, half hidden by the wheelhouse, was looking at me with a curious expression.

"Can he be stolen?" I held my tongue. The captain was hurried at dawn, and the chief officer took command of the ship. It was clear that Pete must have fallen overboard, and no one suspected the share I had had in the catastrophe.

In due time we arrived at Bristol, and by my own satisfaction I initiated the necessary inquiries as to the individual named by the man Grierson. The bank and long since ceased to exist. I traced the rapidly with which everything had taken place seemed to have stunned me, and I was unable to move.

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himself. "And what does he mean by calling my wife his 'Darling Kitty'?"

And it is possible that old "Bluebeard" was not so much as he seemed.

He sat down on the sofa, stunned as it were, and dazed. "Old Bluebeard," and "Darling Kitty," and "Your own in a word, whirling confusion. And then tears gushed up to his eyes—tears, sadder and more bitter than the waters of the Dead Sea."

He had such faith in blue-eyed "Catherine." He had repeated in her such implicit confidence, that now that the core stones of the edifice of all this faith was torn away, it seemed as if the whole universe was tottering around him.

"I'll send her home to her mother," he said, hoarsely. "I'll break up house-keeping and go to Europe. What does it matter where or how I live, if I have no little Catherine?"

And then he remembered old Jenkins' croaking prophecies, and pictured to himself old Jenkins' exultations in their speedy realization.

"Confused the fellow?" thought he, involuntarily clenching his fist. "How hot of tobacco. He is certainly better than I am. I'll send her home to her mother."

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